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SELECTED ARTICLES ON ARMED FORCES IN NORTH VIETNAM

by Lt. Gen. Tran Van Tra

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FOREWORD

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SELECTED ARTICLES ON ARMED FORCES IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. What Our People Must Do to Build Up the Armed Forces and Strengthen Defense

[Following is a translation of an article by Lt. Gen. Tran Van Tra, Deputy Chief of General Staff, Vietnam People's Army, in Thoi Su Pho Thong (Popular Current Events), Hanoi, 22 December 1959, pages 20-26.]

Question 2.

The Party and the Government appeal to all party members and the entire people to participate positively in building up the armed forces and strengthening defense. What is the significance of such a mission vis-a-vis the promotion of socialism in the North, and the struggle to reunify the country by peaceful means? In what way will the world situation, which appears to be easing, affect our building up the armed forces and strengthening defense?

Answer.

Under Party leadership, our people took up arms to launch the August revolution, emancipating the country from the age-old yoke of colonialism. However, the colonists allied themselves with internal imperialists in the hope of forcing the colonial regime once more on our people. For more than nine years, our entire people and army had engaged in protracted war, shedding blood and sweat to free North Vietnam from the colonialist-imperialist grip.

Since the re-establishment of peace, the Party and the Government have led the people in the mission of increasing labor productivity, reconstructing the economy, spreading democracy, and advancing socialism. At the same time, efforts have been made to strengthen our armed forces, and to consolidate our defense. These tasks are two sides of the same solution destined to preserve peace, promote happiness for the people, intensify national power and prosperity, and transform the North into a strong base of national revolution capable of serving as a springboard for the struggle to reunify the fatherland by peaceful means.

Nowadays, world tensions have a tendency to relax themselves. That situation does not arrive by mere chance; nor is it the result of the imperialists' will. It is rather the outcome of the arduous and universal struggle by peace-loving forces in the world, by the world proletariat anchored in socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union. Due to the fact that the socialist forces are becoming stronger than the imperialist forces in all political, economic and military aspects, the imperialist warmongers have to turn now to peace talks and negotiations. But while they cannot start a world war, they are maneuvering to initiate limited wars. The eased world situation does not mean that war has been brought to an end; much less that tensions will wane in certain areas. The clear proof resides in the continuation of NATO, SEATO, American military bases, and in the fact that the imperialists have not agreed to the general disarmament plan proposed by the Soviet Union. Evidence is more conspicuous when recently American warmongers urged the Laotian government to stage civil war for the purpose of making Laos an American military base right on our boundary. That is a premeditated act in the whole imperialist aggressive scheme.

Today our country is still divided; the South of our fatherland is still an American new-fashioned colony; the Americans and the Ngodinh Diem gangs are trying to transform South Vietnam into a military base so that aggression can be directed to the North. They are endeavoring to raise reactionary armies, construct airfields and military harbors, terrorize and suppress the revolutionary movement of southern compatriots. Throughout the five years of peace, the blood of our southern compatriots has been continuously shed; people in all walks of life have been living in insecurity, unemployment and poverty; all efforts have been channeled by the American Diem gang toward military aggressive maneuvers. They also unleash spies into the North to sabotage our peaceful program; they appeal to counterrevolutionists and gangsters to engage in destructive activities. It is clear that the enemy is occupying half of our country, living at our door and always finding opportunities to sow disorder and make aggression. Can we overlook this obvious danger?

It is for this reason that the Party and the Government appeal to all party members and the entire people to build up the army and strengthen national defense. We have sacrificed our lives to gain independence, liberty and happiness; it is our mission now to make the same sacrifices to preserve them. We love peace, we maintain peace; it is a matter of course that we will resolutely annihilate anyone who violates our territorial integrity and our peaceful life in the North. If we want the North to progress in socialism, we must first maintain it in peace and security. And the protection of the North rests on strong armed forces capable of sustained defense. It behooves every citizen, then, to participate in building up the army, the militia and the armed security forces.

The North must advance on the road of socialism, with a healthy economy and a powerful defense, before the reunification of our country by peaceful means can be attempted. The enemy will never abandon, by their own will, their pernicious desire to partition our country and precipitate aggression on the North. Only struggle can bring about victory; only light can dissipate darkness. If in the North peace is maintained, the promotion of socialism achieves success, happy life is attained, then the Southern compatriots will see clearly their future in the future of our country; they will believe in their power to struggle for self-emancipation and national unity based on independence and democracy.

Question 2.

There is the contention that in peace time the strengthening of armed forces and consolidation of national defense are unnecessary and could hamper economic developments as well as the improvement of living standards. Could you give your opinion on that matter?

Answer.

As everybody knows the Party and the Government always concern themselves with the happiness and peaceful life of all people, especially the life of the working class. In addition to realizing economic, cultural and social policies, the Party and the Government have gradually reduced the armed forces, cut down the defense budget and transferred a great number of soldiers and cadres to the production and reconstruction field. Part of the regular army's time is also reserved for activities in that domain. Every effort is directed to reconstructing our nation and raising the living standard of our people.

But, as I have said earlier, we cannot overlook the enemy from within and the aggressors from without. So long as the imperialists and their followers cling to aggressive schemes, we cannot neglect our duty in building the army, raising a militia, and autonomous guard, and consolidating national defense. We can promote happiness for the people and raise their standard of living only when that duty is fulfilled. And the American-Diem gang wants us to minimize that duty so that they can encroach on our sovereignty, exploit our people, and usurp the fruit of our efforts deployed in the revolutionary struggle. In other words, if the armed forces and defense are inadequate, not only our life is jeopardized, but also our material and political interests are lost. The idea that in peace time, the strengthening of our defense is unnecessary and detrimental to economic developments as well as to the pursuit of happiness is not only wrong, but also dangerous. I do not speak of the traitorous elements who use that deceiving idea with a destructive purpose. I speak of the straight forward persons who have not understood the real enemy schemes; who conceive their own interests at the expense of class and national interests; who see the present advantages and forget the long-range program reserved for posterity.

While capitalist imperialists still exist, the proletariat in the world cannot forget the mission of increasing production, achieving happiness, and preserving the fruits of labor.

Question 3.

What must our people do to strengthen armed forces and consolidate defense?

Answer

Our people, generally speaking, have two important missions: economic production and defense of the fatherland.

The defense of our fatherland is the mission of everybody. Here we must stress the heroic tradition of our people, of whom workers and farmers form the fighting nucleus. During the recent war of resistance, our people had, under Party leadership, supported enthusiastically the army and the guerillas by sending their sons and brothers to the front to kill the enemy. Our people had also given food, and medicine to the fighters, and protected them at our rear as well as in enemy territory. In large campaigns, our people had zealously contributed their physical efforts and money to achieve great victories; they worked along the front line; provided medical aid; supplied food and clothing; sacrificed even their property and lives to save the army and guerillas. This glorious tradition is our greatest advantage which carries on in our mission of building the armed forces and strengthening national defense in these years of peace. Our people must nurture that tradition and that heroic fighting spirit to accomplish the following missions:

- Increasing labor productivity to raise production; developing all economic branches to improve living standard; advancing socialism; creating the material conditions that can lead to the construction of a strong rear base and a powerful defense.

- Alongside the individual economic mission is the individual defense responsibility. For example, those who have acceptable conditions should participate in the militia organization, in the regular army or in reserve forces. Workers and farmers in particular have the responsibility of protecting production facilities, industrial plants, mines, and cooperative farms, beside the mission of producing and increasing production. Those who do not have adequate physical conditions have the duty to look after family affairs and urge members of the household to participate in national defense. That is also an important mission for every citizen. In so far as defense and security are concerned, every citizen must support the army, the autonomous guard, and the armed security forces to destroy the counter-revolution elements, enemy spies, special forces and rangers.

In case of actual aggression by foolish imperialists, the people shall fight along side the armed forces to resolutely annihilate them.

In addition, our people have the responsibility of executing the policies relating to the armed forces, such as special treatment for war veterans and practical aid for militiamen. Such actions are also contributions to the consolidation of national defense.

In any circumstances, in any period of time, our army is the popular revolutionary army, the dearest element of the people, and for the people. Consequently, the civilian-military unity forms the invincible power to triumph over any enemy. Once the entire people participate in strengthening the armed forces and consolidating national defense, the armed forces will surely fulfill its mission; national defense will surely be solidified.

Question 4

What is the present and future relationship between the armed forces and the people?

Answer

That our armed forces and our people unite enduringly, even in the most dangerous moment, is a tradition. To the people the armed forces dedicated their lives; to the armed forces the people gave support and protection; this unity culminated in the victory of our resistance. Since the re-establishment of peace, that relationship has been maintained strongly. Owing to Party education, our army has always heightened its revolutionary nature. It helped the people in the 1955 tornado; it continuously shares the peoples' labor in fighting against flood and drought where it is present; it participates in harvests, production, disease protection, literary campaigns, etc. The army always sides with the people in agrarian reform, propagation of democracy, farming cooperation, and industrial and trade development.

On their part, the people always facilitate the accomplishments of the military mission. At the front lines, at the borders, along the coasts, and in the interior the people have led the armed forces to discovering the enemy, and ferreting out bandits, and eliminating traitors and counterrevolution elements. The aid the people gave to the wounded, the invalid, and the convalescent of the armed forces was very touching. Moreover, the people, especially the youth, have continuously received military instructions, joined the army, and enlarged the militia organizations.

All these activities have echoed the sentiment and stressed the close relationship between the armed forces and the people, in war as well as in peace. They reflect the revolutionary nature of the popular army and the love the people reserve for it. They are being increased and developed.

Some peoples think that in future wars our armed forces will use modern tactics over large battle fields, and the relationship with the people will not be the same as during the war of resistance. That is a wrong idea. Of course, future wars will call for modern tactics; nevertheless, under any conditions, popular support is still important and popular collaboration is still the decisive factor in victory. Any war will be a war for all people; it engages not only the armed forces but also the entire people; not only the regular army but also the autonomous guards, the popular guerillas; it requires not only modern regular army tactics, but also guerilla tactics and other simple methods. It would so happen because when we fight back in a war forced on us by the enemy, we have the just cause, namely, the defense of our fatherland, and the preservation of what we have achieved through revolution.

For that reason, the relationship between the armed forces and the people must be closer now than ever before. Our armed forces belong to the people and serve the people. Every citizen and every soldier have the responsibility to use all means to further the civilian-military unity and mutual support. Any thinking or acting which compromises that noble unity is a crime against the country and against revolution.

The relationship between the armed forces and the people came into being when our army was created; it has been fortified throughout the war of resistance and in the recent years of peace; it will be cemented more and more until the day when the armed forces outlive their usefulness, the day when war no longer exists and the imperialists are wiped out of this world.

2. Major General Phan Trong Tue Interviewed

on People's Armed Security Forces

[Following is a translation of an unsigned article in Tien Phong (~~The Leader~~), Hanoi, No 506, 23 December 1959, pages 1 & 2.]

Vanguard.

Question: Will you please give us your view on the mission and the growth of the Armed Security Force.

Answer: The Armed Security Force is an instrument of the Party and the government. It is the armed constituent of the police branch, which has complex military and political missions: it suppresses the sabotage activities of the internal counterrevolution elements and of the external aggressive reactionaries; it is always ready to ensure the security of our borders, sea coasts, territorial waters, interior zones, and lines of demarcation.

The armed security force is growing and maturing.

On the 14th anniversary of our independence, the Government fixed the badges and insignias for the Armed Security Force. That makes the officers and the enlisted men understand more fully their important and proud role.

During the war of resistance, the armed security forces fought valiantly alongside the army and the guerillas to destroy the enemy at the front as well as in rear areas; to protect the Party and the administrative authorities; and to contribute to the emancipation of our country. Today, the armed security force continues that honorable mission. Its cadres and enlisted men constantly improve their knowledge. They are always prepared to fight in conjunction with the Army and the guerillas anywhere in our territory to thwart enemy aggressive schemes. They will ensure internal security and expedite the promotion of socialism in the North so that we may have a powerful base for the struggle to reunify our fatherland.

In celebrating the armed forces day President Ho had this to tell us:

- Preserve national unity, improve your knowledge,
- maintain integrity, practice thrift,
- accomplish your mission,
- overcome obstacles,
- be unbending before the enemy,
- be ready to sacrifice for the country,
- be loyal to the Party,
- and serve the people whole heartedly.

In order to carry out President Ho's instruction, we are endeavoring to apply and develop the regular army standing operations procedure, to study and work, to surmount difficulties, and to fulfill the mission assigned by the Party, the government and the people.

With Party leadership, with the support of the people, with the participation of the youth, with our own effort, we believe that we can accomplish that mission, justifying the confidence of the Party, the government and the people.

Question: Sir, what is the role and the responsibility of our youth regarding the armed security force?

Answer: In the revolutionnary phase of our history, the young people responded to the appeals of President Ho and the Party, and followed the steps of their fathers and brothers to destroy aggressors, overthrow the colonist yoke, crown the August revolution with glory, and open a bright future for the country.

Today, in the reconstruction of our nation, the youth understand their important role. They are doing their best to promote socialism. At the same time they do not forget the mission of every Vietnam citizen, which is to defend our fatherland, protect the revolutionary achievements, maintain the happy life of our people, and prepare the road for future generations.

This mission requires that the young be present night and day along desolate frontiers, on remote islands, at industrial plants, and on the rice fields to prevent the insidious activities of the enemies who are threatening to sabotage our national reconstruction and jeopardize our happiness. Aside from their duty, the youth also love these missions because they suit their courage, inventiveness, resourcefulness and their tendency to action.

Being the reserve force of the Party, the youth not only form the core of the armed forces, but also extend their progress.

In the present Armed Security Force, the youth occupy 85% of the total number of cadres and enlisted men, an important ratio indeed. Under the leadership of the district party committees, the youth battalions have become principal units and set the pace for other organizations. Members of the youth organizations demonstrate their worthiness and their lead in all tasks. In the mission of security, a central mission of the armed forces, the youth developed many valuable initiatives. Battalion No. 3 of the TanTrao unit, for example, has set up the light and sound alert system. The folding ladder used in crossing walls and barbed wire, together with fifteen patrol methods which reinforce surveillance were invented by comrade Dap of a frontier post in Thanh Hoa. The border crossing by enemy spies in Nghe An, Thanh Hoa, and in the North West were uncovered and stopped in time. The young comrades have heightened the spirit of self-support, self-sufficiency, and have made a great contribution in building military quarters and in supplying the security posts along the borders and on the islands where difficult situations prevail.

In military training, many units, such as the Ninh Binh and Phu Tho battalions, have practiced firing with real cartridges and have reached 100% accuracy. Many members were sharp marksmen who put all six cartridges in the bull's eye of the target.

Another battalion in Nghe An, under the order of the district party committee, used expedients to draw water from a distance of three or four kilometers to the unit, thus solving daily sanitary problems.

In addition to that, the young people always perform voluntarily a principal role in establishing cooperative messes in conducting cultural activities and physical training in increasing thrift and in working for the socialist cause.

What I mention above gives only a summary account of the activities the youth pursue in the armed security force. Even in the competitive movement organized for the occasion of celebrating the Party's 30th anniversary, the president's 70th birthday and the nation's 15th independence anniversary, the youth battalions excelled other unions. Nevertheless, in order to achieve success in the forthcoming competitive movements, the youth in the armed security force cannot detach themselves from the national youth organizations, in general, and the central and regional youth organizations, in particular. On this 15th anniversary of the establishment of our popular armed forces, I am glad to say, on behalf of the Armed Security Force, that the youth movement has progressed and expanded. I would like to express my best wishes to our young people and hope that they achieve great successes in training, production, in their contribution to socialism, and in their struggle to reunify our country and preserve our regime.

3. Our Military Heritage

[Following is a translation of an article by Hoang Dao Thuy, Chief Liaison Bureau, Political Directorate, Vietnam People's Army, in Nhan Dan (The People), Hanoi, No. 2094, 10 December 1959, page 3.]

One day in my childhood I went shopping with my father. At the market a frightening scene startled me: several human heads dangled below the branch of a tree. My father told me in a low voice: "Those are the heads of the soldiers who attempted to poison the French officers in Hanoi. Those brave soldiers were guillotined yesterday by the French on the lawn situated at the end of Hang Day street."

Along the city pavement, we met a French policeman with a mustache, red nose, blue eyes, and a heavy revolver at the belt. I was so fearful that I asked my father to go home immediately.

As we reached the village, the voice of the district chief pierced our ears. He was threatening to "chop off" the head of the neighbor who did not come to draw the "French" fan while he slept.

Well, every step was a terrible step.

Perhaps my father was discontented to have a timid son. Several days afterwards he led me to a neighboring village to visit Mrs. Teo. We saw her on the way home from work; in her bag were a dead crab and a bunch of vegetables. She had trachoma and swabbed her eyes often with bare hands while we talked.

On the way home my father related to me her story. "At the age of eighteen, he said, she went to work one day with her fifteen-year-old nephew in the rice field. About noon they met by chance the fellow Nho Hoan who was going to the city, across the deserted country. Nho Hoan was a fiendish man who used to make mischievous reports to mandarins and wreak havoc on villagers. Without any words, Mrs. Teo and her nephew killed Nho Hoan, cut his body into three parts, hid them under the irrigation ditch and walked home placidly. When the matter was discovered, Mrs. Teo was sentenced to nine years in jail. After the stay in jail she went back to the village, got married, and continued to till the soil. Never had she told anybody of the old story."

I wanted to run back to see once more what kind of person Mrs. Teo was. True, it was a bold heart behind a humble figure.

One night long after our visit to Mrs. Teo, a village patrolman came to our house, whispered something to my father and left quietly.

Again, another story. "I'll tell you what has happened", my father said, "but you must promise not to disclose it to anybody. That patrolman and his brother live in Cha hamlet. Today they met a Frenchman who was hunting. They put him in a pig cage and threw him into the river."

"Aren't they afraid of the French?"

"They are. But when the opportunity comes they do the killing."

An idea kept my mind in turmoil. Mrs. Teo with trachoma, the two brothers living in Cha hamlet, were not educated people, but they did have great courage.

"Do you see," my father added, "even when the soldiers were about to be guillotined at Hang Day Street they did not show any sign of fear. A soldier, bound to a pole, still made a loud speech: Remember us when you have wiped out the French. They believed in the future even when the chopping blade was at work."

Since then I kept saying to myself every time I saw a man with short trousers and bare back that he would not be ordinary.

It is true that our history, which is more than four thousand years old, begins with three typical and interesting tales:

First, Mai An Tien, who was exiled by the emperor to a deserted island, transformed it into a rich living place. Second, a beautiful princess left the royal palace to follow a husband from the low class, whom she adored. And last, the story of a young man in Giong village, who used a lamboo stick to kill aggressors.

These three tales underlie three characteristics of our people: hard-working, sentimental, and heroic.

Our ancestors tattooed their bodies to trap fish under water for their living: they struggled hard against flood and drought, and shed their blood to defend the land already impregnated with their sweat. The first war they fought was a war against aggression. The An Aggressors from the North occupied our land and used all means to destroy our people. They erected a stone horse and told our people to feed it. If the horse did not eat they killed the feeders. Our ancestors staged a rebellion and, in one afternoon, swept the enemy away. The hero of that war was a young man from Phu Dong village who used a bamboo stick to kill the enemy when his sword was broken.

The heroic tradition which began in that period was nurtured and sustained for a thousand years by blood and sweat, and gave vent to our fighting spirit. Our national will had enabled the two Trung sisters at Me Linh to push back the Han troops as far as Hai Nan. The aggressors were very atrocious. They killed our people wantonly. But the dead were replaced by the living, fathers were succeeded by sons. After the Trung sisters there was Lady Trieu. It was strange that many women played the role reserved for men.

The unfortunate situations of our country in the days of yore had given birth to temerarious tactics. We always had to use a handful of troops to fight a powerful enemy army. Ly Bon, who tried to apply a static defense, had to pay a very high price. Trieu Quang Phuc, who had gathered experiences in defeat, employed guerilla tactics and gave the enemy a fatal blow.

Very early in our history, our people understood two methods of fighting; the one consisted of using massive power to destroy the enemy immediately; the other was to raise our forces gradually and to strike the enemy when we could turn up the balance of power.

Furthermore, the story of Trong Thuy betraying his father-in-law, and Phat Tu deceiving his allies, always reminded our founding fathers be cautious in their mission of defending the fatherland.

Phung Bo Cai was the hero who reoccupied the capital of Daila well defended by the Tang expeditionary forces. Encirclement by surprise was the key to victory.

Another tactic used to repel the enemy was to exploit terrain features, mountains, rivers, and tidal movements to force the enemy into a critical position. Ngo-Quyen in Son Tay used this tactic to end one thousand years of colonial regimes. Though at the time the country was submerged in both civil war and aggressions, Ngo Quyen restored peace to the people. He lured the Han navy into the section of the Bach Dang River where the ebbing tide crushed enemy boats against preplanted poles. Admiral Hoang Thao of the Han naval forces was killed in action.

From then on, our people fostered the conviction that armed forces were the most effective weapon to defend the country. The young boy Dinh Bo Linh, who enjoyed playing wargames while tending buffaloes, achieved success later in raising ten divisions of troops. When the Sung forces from the North attacked our country, Le Dai Hanh led those ten divisions to destroy the enemy at Chi Lang. For the first time our people crushed a large enemy force.

The militia of the Trung sisters, the guerillas of Lady Trieu, and the knights of Phung Tay Vuong were then replaced by a strong national army. That young but heroic army was tested in battle when the Sung Dynasty in China dispatched another aggressive force to our country. By that time our administration had been reorganized, agriculture had been developed by methods of irrigation, and the people had been satisfied by humane laws. Knowing that the enemy was preparing to attack us, we struck first by crossing the China Sea into the enemy concentration point and surprising the main Sung forces on their territory. Then we withdrew to our land and waited for them.

During this period we also exploited climatic conditions to neutralize the enemy. We let the aggressors enter our country and sealed up the borders. A war of attrition was then conducted stubbornly from Spring to Summer. It was in the hot season when plagues break out that we launched the counterattack. Half of the enemy forces was destroyed, and an armistice was concluded.

More fighting experiences were accumulated by then. Our military and economic establishment also progressed to the extent that the Sung Dynasty tried to study and imitate it.

Another test came at the beginning of the 13th Century. The Mongols who had conquered all China, established the Yuan Dynasty, run over Iran, and occupied half of Europe, moved into our country. Our Tran emperor saw only one policy, namely, total war. He convoked the elders at Dien-hong palace and asked for their opinions. All proposed war. Tran Quoc Tuan was immediately designated to command the united popular front. The Mongols arrived in overwhelming number. They leveled our cities, and killed our inhabitants. As for us, we conducted guerilla

warfare everywhere, spreading enemy forces and weakening them. Place by place we encircled the enemy and isolated their important elements. Enemy supplies were blocked and likely exits from our country were barricaded. The summer heat also helped us to destroy the aggressors. Van Kiep and Bach Dang witnessed humiliating enemy defeats. Remnants of the Mongol army were pursued far out of our border.

Three times the Mongols attempted aggression, three times they were defeated. The victories prove that the determination of the people, the fighting spirit of the armed forces, the heroic military heritage of the nation are three weapons with which we can always triumph over any aggressors.

This is true. Under the Le Dynasty, our people, responding to the appeals of Le Loi and Nguyen Trai, took up arms to wage a protracted war against the Ming occupation. Throughout a period of ten years our forces were weak but our strategic achievements were remarkable. We encircled cities but did not occupy them; we moved swiftly from Nghe An to Thang Long, forcing fifty thousand enemy troops into the swamps of Chuong My where death was their only escape. The balance of power was soon tilted in our favor. Even when two more enemy reinforcement corps arrived to save the occupation forces in Hanoi, our small force was still able to control the situation. We finished off the enemy by striking at their weakest points.

By the time of emperor Quang Trung, our defense became stronger and the tactics of deception was combined with extreme mobility to repel the enemy. The immense Manchu expeditionary force fled in chaos, breaking the floating bridge across the Red River and strewing the water with dead bodies.

Dangerous terrain features, severe climatic conditions, and protracted and strenuous fighting had transformed our people into a heroic army. With flexibility of maneuver and courage, we always achieved victory at the end.

Under the Nguyen Dynasty, our country was conquered by foreigners because our people did not support the royal mandate. The indifference and suspicion of our people towards the incompetent Nguyen administrations were the main cause for our country being occupied so quickly by French forces.

At any rate, the French found that the stay in our land after such an easy occupation was difficult. The pacification of the new colony was painful, expensive and time consuming, despite the fact that the French colonialists had exploited the differences between various sects and created by French missionaries, and bribed traitorous Vietnamese mandarins.

The revolution initiated by Phan Dinh Phung, the rebellions at Ba Dinh, Yen Bay, Cho Rang, and Thai Nguyen demonstrated clearly that our heroic national heritage was always maintained.

In response to popular aspirations, the Indochinese Communist Party then made its appearance. The leader of this Party had no name, no title. He did not exist above the people but among the people. The enemy and their lackeys recognized that leader, arrested him and sentenced him to death. There were times when the Party nucleus was almost completely destroyed. But a falling head was replaced by another one. The people had been awakened and no atrocious forces can suppress the popular will. A patriotic people always find a patriotic leader to follow.

Propagating the doctrines of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the inherent heroism of our people, the Party succeeded in fomenting the movement of resistance. Our national heritage was enriched and fortified by communist doctrines.

The day our government left Hanoi to begin the war of resistance, many persons could not hide their worries. President Ho made clear to them this: "The enemy is at the highest point from which there is no way upwards; they can only go down. We are at the low point but we have an endless road upwards. We will win."

After that, comrade Truong Chinh explained our fighting in his book "Protracted War, the Road to Victory."

No words could describe the way we fought in the war of resistance. It denotes how the heroism of our people had been guided by the Communist Party to glory.

Our enemies in recent years were not the Han, the Tang, the Sung, the Yuan, the Ming, the Manchu. They were the most powerful imperialistic nations. From within we were confronted with the enemy who had penetrated our territory; from without we had to face reactionary encirclement.

We began to withdraw at first. And the miserable people carried in their hearts the appeal of the Party. The strong enemy was aided by traitorous lackeys. We avoided disadvantageous actions to stage guerilla war. During the course of fighting we also endeavored to modernize our armed forces. Where we withdrew the enemy came. Enemy forces spread themselves thinner and thinner until they reached the Northern valley. There they found their tombs because retreat was impossible even when more arms and more men were poured in. The situation had changed.

Sometimes it appeared that during the war the free territory was confined to the zone between Da Phuc and Cho Moi. But in reality, we had total support behind the enemy lines. Heroes were found not only among fighters but also among civilians who performed heroic acts.

When the withdrawal phase elapsed, we launched attacks at enemy posts and strong points. Under Party guidance, the revolutionary war added precious experiences to our military heritage.

Agrarian reform then brought into existence a new production process. The new supply enabled us to level the Tu Yu position, to attack Hoa Binh Province, to cross the Khau Va mountain into the Northwestern region.

The enemy resisted only to be destroyed. Their positions behind bunkers were already hopeless. As our rear areas expanded, the enemy's contracted; their activities led only to wearing down their fighting capacity. The logic of our situation was verified: we advanced while the enemy withdrew. Then in the Winter-Spring campaign in 1954, the last and most daring enemy effort was thwarted. The Party led our armed forces to neutralizing the enemy on all fronts. Dien Bien Phu was the last nail on the French colonialist coffin. The American interventionists were deterred; victory was inevitable.

If on the battlefield we re-discovered the military heritage of our people, then in the war of resistance we found the bold and intelligent leadership of the Party. Revolutionary Communism has led our people to success.

We used to say that "in looking at the past we can know the future," and that "the past determines the future." Our past, our heritage, and our tradition have led us to victory. That past, that heritage, that tradition will be recaptured, recreated, glorified, and enriched by Marxism and Leninism.

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